

Snow Wolves and Dragon Riders

by Llegion

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Summary: Elsa is trying to maintain her secret, but a strangely dressed man shows up at her coronation saying he knew her father. Hiccup runs into some strange, violent dragon riders. Can these strangers be trusted? And what happens when they bring the two together? Hiccelsa 'cause it's awesome.

1. Chapter 1

****A/N:** So, I'm taking a break from Lost Soul due to writer's block and have decided to write a Hiccelsa story. This is going to alternate between movies until they meet each other. I'm also only doing HTTYD 2, so assume that Hiccstrid broke up between the movies. I happen to like Astrid a lot, so she'll still be pretty cool and involved, just not dating Hiccup. And now, on with the show.**

Elsa awoke from another nightmare covered in sweat and frost. A strange combination, to be sure, but the queen-to-be didn't even notice anymore.

Elsa quickly rose out of bed to make her way over towards the restroom. She needed to wash her face, and she hoped that some cold water would shock her out of her nightmare.

The nightmare. Every night for the past month, the same dream had been visiting her again and again. Her sister, servants, counselors, soldiers, all frozen in the middle of their day-to-day business, leaving Elsa to walk through the frozen halls among the ice statues in silence. Terrible, deafening silence.

Elsa shuddered once, then plunged her head into the bowl of water, only to be repelled quickly and painfully. While she had been distracted, she had allowed her powers to overflow and freeze the water. Again.

Quickly grabbing and donning a pair of gloves and something thicker than her nightgown, Elsa cracked open the door and peered out into the hallway. Thankfully, her nightmare was once again only a dream. A figment of her imagination. Only a dream. Not real. Conceal it, don't feel it. Don't let it show.

Grimacing at the number of mantras she had been collecting, Elsa walked down towards the courtyard for some exercise outdoors before she locked herself in her room. Again.

Elsa sighed, and there was more to worry about now than ever before. With her coronation coming up inâ€¦ how many days was it? It was on her birthday, which was on Saturday, which wasâ€¦ Oh, no!

Elsa quickly dashed back to her room to begin preparing. She had to make sure she had as much control on her powers as possible. She also had to ensure that the servants were prepared, that the dining hall and ball room were well-lit, and that she knew what to do for the ceremony. So much to do, so little timeâ€¦

LINEBREAK

Elsa steeled her nerves as the first well-wisher approached. The ceremony had gone fairly well, she had almost had a heart attack when frost began creeping up the scepter, but other than that nothing bad had happened.

"Congratulations, my queen."

"Thank you."

"May you reign long, my queen."

"Thank you."

The evening stayed much the same for a few hours. People ate, danced, talked, overall quite a success. Even the cake tasted wonderful, considering it had been made in only a few hours. Somehow the bust of the founder of Arendelle had made its way onto the cake. How, no one knew, but it mattered little now.

"Excuse me, Queen Elsa?"

Elsa turned at the sound of a young man's voice. She realized she had been lost in thought for a few minutes. When she turned, she had to hold in a gasp at the strange man standing before her. He stood at least six and a half feet high, but wasn't large. He seemed to be a bit below average weight, but not underweight. He had almost ice-white hair and pitch-black eyes, which caused a strange contrast. But the strangest thing about him was his clothes. He wore some kind ofâ€¦ was that a dress? She almost let out a yelp of laughter before she managed to stop herself.

Upon seeing the amusement in her eyes, the man rolled his own. "Yes, yes, I know, that's a weird thing I'm wearing. Stupid fashion. The Guild-master spent way too much time in Greece and Rome, if you ask me. Requires us to wear these on formal occasions." Thankfully, he stopped his rant upon seeing her face. "Apologies, Queen Elsa, I am Gray Marshall." When he bowed, everything about him was sharp, precise, and unnervingly military.

Elsa responded with a curtsy. Not too deep, not too shallow, just right. "How do you do, mister Marshall?"

"I'm quite alright, Your Highness. If I may offer my condolences to you and your family for your loss. Your father was a great man, taken far too soon."

Elsa was quite surprised. Her father had died almost two years ago, and though people still mentioned it, no one had offered her their condolences in a long time. "Yes, thank you. He is dearly missed. If I may, how did you know my father?"

At this, Gray straightened almost imperceptibly. "That is actually why I'm here, Your Highness. If I may, could I speak with you somewhere quieter? This concerns yourâ€¦talent."

Fear clawed at Elsa's heart, attempting to gain a handhold. _No, surely he can't know._ She told herself. _There's no way father would tell anyone, he even had Anna's memories erased._

"I don't understand. What ability?"

"The one your father told you to hide? The one that feels likeâ€¦magic?" He seemed confused, probably thinking that he had the wrong sister.

"I'm not to leave this room alone, no matter what for." Elsa said, grasping at straws to politely end this conversation before she got too scared. One of the thousands of books her father had left her came back to whisper in her ear. Fear is the mind-killer.

The man looked surprised. "I didn't mean like that, your highness. Gather those that you trust and those that know about the secret and gather them somewhere we can meet."

Elsa just shook her head and mumbled, "No one else knows."

Gray started, obviously surprised that no one else knew. Thankfully he kept his voice lowered to a reasonable volume. "What? Why would you not tell anyone?"

"My father believed it was the right thing to do."

He groaned. "Why on Earth would he think that? That's a terrible idea! That almost as bad of an idea as-"

Gray was interrupted by the sudden appearance of the Crown Princess Anna and an auburn-haired man in a fine suit. "Elsa!"

Elsa jumped a little at Anna's sudden appearance and exclamation. Anna quickly grabbed her hand and led her away from Gray, who was frozen in place from the suddenness of the situation and the sensitivity of the matter that the princess could have overheard. Were she not preoccupied with getting her sister away from the guy in the dress. "Wait, Anna, I need to-"

"No buts!" Her sister exclaimed. "We need to talk, we have something to tell you and we are going to go over here and-" Once she was sure that they were out of earshot of Gray, Anna quickly turned to Elsa

and began to look over her like a mother hen. "Are you okay, Elsa?"

"What?" Elsa was confused by her sister's question. "Of course I'm okay, Anna. Why would you think differently?"

Anna sighed in relief. "Well, you were talking to that creepy guy and looked scared, like, really scared. I wanted to get you away from him."

"Creepy? How is he creepy? And I was not scared!"

Anna merely shrugged. "Elsa, he dyed his hair to match yours, he's tall and looks like he's plotting something, and do I even have to mention the dress?"

"No, that has something to do with fashion from Greece, I think?"

"Grease? Like, from bacon?"

"Maybe, I honestly have no idea."

"Whatever, as long as he isn't hurting you."

"Um, excuse me." Hans' voice interrupted the sisters' conversation from where he was awkwardly standing a few awkward feet away. "Anna, didn't you have something you wanted to, you know, tell her?"

"What? Oh, right! Well, Elsa, Hans and I- oh, have you met yet? So sorry, just got distracted, and well, you know. Anyway: Hans, Elsa. Elsa, Hans. There, now, Elsa, Hans and I have been talking and we've been getting along really well and, well"

Hans picked up where she left off. "We would like-

"Your blessing-

"For-

"Our-

"Marriage!" They finished together, then looked at each other with barely concealed joy.

"Marriage, oh, wow, um-" Elsa was very much distracted from the mystery that was Gray Marshall. As a matter of fact, her entire train of thought was just derailed with major casualties. "Marriage? Um I'm sorry, I'm very confused." She looked from one to the other, trying to convince herself that they were pulling her leg, but Anna wasn't one to do that.

Was she?

It suddenly occurred to Elsa how poor of a sister she had been to Anna. She hadn't had an actual talk with her in years. They hadn't played together for even longer. But, she had a good reason for not talking to her own sister.

Right?

When she finally pulled herself from her thoughts, not much time had actually passed. Anna was rambling on about where people would live. Wait, people? Live here? No, no, no. They couldn't. She kept trying to interrupt Anna, but she was so involved in her rant that she wasn't listening. Also, Hans wasn't helping by encouraging her.

"Wait. Slow down. No one's brothers are staying here. No one is getting married."

Anna looked at her, aghast. "Wait, what?"

Elsa clasped her hands and looked pleadingly at Anna. "May I talk to you, please? Alone?"

Anna looked uncertain, before wrapping herself around Hans' arm. "No. Whatever you have to say, you can say to both of us."

Elsa sighed, this was starting to look bad. But she steeled herself and prepared to deliver the news. "Fine. You can't marry a man you just met."

Anna's mouth dropped open, and she started to get defensive. "You can if it's true love."

Elsa was starting to get exasperated. "Anna, what do you know about true love?"

"More than you. All you know is how to shut people-"

This time, it was Gray's turn to interrupt. "If I may be so bold, your highnesses."

Anna whirled around to face him, while Elsa looked over her sister's shoulder at the tall foreigner. "This is a private affair Mr. Creepster! And you would do well to mind your manners when in the presence of royalty!"

Gray sighed, looking tired and annoyed. "I merely thought that I might lend my assistance. I do have some understanding of marriage and true love."

Anna was getting annoyed. First this bozo hits on her sister, then he tries to insert himself into private family matters!? She was about to give him another piece of her mind when Elsa's soft voice interrupted her. "Mr. Marshall, I do apologize for my sister's ratherâ€¦| rude behavior." At this, Elsa shot a look at her sister that demanded silence. "I believe that you had something to talk to me about?"

Gray bowed, nodding his head. "Yes, Your Majesty. However, what I want to talk to you about is not for public ears, and the amount of attention this group has attracted makes it ratherâ€¦| difficult to keep things confidential."

Surprised, Elsa looked around, only to see that only a few people were still dancing, and even they had most of their attention directed towards the royal family and the two foreigners.

Immediately, and almost completely subconsciously, Elsa straightened and played the part of the perfect queen. "Of course. Come, Mr. Marshall, we shall speak in the council chambers."

"I'm coming with you." Declared Anna, in a voice that said that no was not an answer.

"I apologize, princess, but this matter is confidential between the Queen, your late father, and myself." Gray said politely, but Elsa thought that she could see a smirk tugging at the corner of his mouth. However, it was gone so fast that she wondered if she had imagined it.

"Wait, what?" Anna said, going from angry to completely unbalanced by the sudden mention of her father. "What does dad have to do with Mr. Creepster over here? Elsa? Mind explaining?" It appeared that marriage was suddenly the furthest thing from her mind.

"Anna, I need to speak to Mr. Marshall here alone. I'll come back and talk to you when we're finished, alright?"

"No!" Anna exploded, her anger returning. "If this has something to do with dad, then I want in!"

"Princess Anna, I shall speak with the Queen first, and when we are finished she will speak with you and she can disclose anything and everything we discuss to you then. Besides, I believe your marriage will look much more appealing _after_ our talk. Prince Hans, I do believe that this song is a very nice song from your kingdom. Why don't you and the princess dance and make wedding arrangements while the Queen and I talkâ€¦" He looked at Elsa from the corner of his eye. "Business."

Hans, seeing that this was going nowhere, decided that a delayed audience was better than no audience. Besides, he could wait. The princess was like clay in his hand, the queen would be no problem, though this new player did seem troublesome. No matter, he would return to whatever rock he crawled out of within a week or so.

"Of course. Come, Anna, I think that you'll like this one. It's veryâ€¦| distracting."

LINEBREAK

Elsa opened the door to the council chamber to reveal a small round table capable of seating up to eight people comfortably. She took a seat in one of the chairs, remembering to keep her back straight and her hands firmly clasped in her lap. She gestured to one of the seats and asked him to sit down, but Gray politely declined and stood at parade rest, hands behind his back and feet shoulder-width apart.

"Alright, you said something about my father. Tell me everything."

"As you know, your parents died whilst travelling back from visiting your aunt in Corona. While in Corona, your father learned of the Guild's existence. I don't quite understand how, but he managed to gain the Guild-master's favor, quite the achievement I should

say."

Elsa looked at him, confused. "But what is this Guild? You keep talking about it like it's famous, but I've never heard of it."

"I'm not surprised, most people don't hear about us unless the Guild-master allows them to. Apparently, your father needed help enough for the master to talk to him. Very lucky indeed. Now, where was I? Oh, yes, what we are. We're mercenaries, plain and simple."

Elsa almost fainted from shock. "MERCENARIES!?" She cried. "There is no way that my father would ever deal with mercenaries. He was a noble man, a good man, a-

"Yes, yes, I know. A righteous man." Gray interrupted. "Full of the word of the Lord and all thaty jazz. Now, if you'll let me explain?" At her mute, angry jerk of her head, he continued. "Thank you. Now, we are a band of mercenaries, but we're slightly different from your average mercenary guild. First off, we only take jobs that would improve someone's life. If the purpose of the job is to hurt someone, we will not take it. However, if the job is to protect someone, we will hurt people to protect that person. Do you understand?"

"But what if you're hired to protect an evil person?"

"If the client is evil, then they will not have found the guild in the first place. Now, there is one other thing that we specialize in." He paused, looking uncertain on how to proceed.

"Well?" Elsa urged, urging him to continue.

"I'll show you mine if you'll show me yours." He said suddenly.

"What?" Elsa almost fell out her seat. "What do you mean?"

"Your magic. Your father explained that you had been born with, how did he say it, oh, yes, 'born with winter in your hand.' Sounds like a freaking poet to me, but to each his own." He shrugged.

Elsa shook her head. "No. No, I'm not supposed to use it. Conceal it, don't feel it. Don't let it show."

Gray looked at her like she was crazy. "Really? That's what they're teaching you? Be afraid of your powers? Dang, and I thought my training was slow. Look, I'll make it easier for you."

Marching out to the opposite end of the room, he held out his hand as though to grasp a staff and slowly curled his fingers inward. Immediately, the room temperature dropped and a small flurry of snow swirled around his hand while frost moved from the ground, creeping up over him and encasing his body in a layer of ice that looked oddly like armor. A helm formed on his head that looked like his entire head was inside a wolf's mouth looking out. The armor around his body had images engraved in it, depicting scenes of a group of wolves hunting.

Ice spread upwards and downwards from his hand to form a seven-foot spear. The tip gleamed like silver, and the bottom formed the head of

a howling wolf. He raised the spear and smacked the ground with the spear, standing straight at attention as though he had done it his whole life.

"I am Captain Gray Marshall, ice mage of the Guild, and commanding officer of the Snow Wolves; charged with the protection and tutoring of the Queen of Arendelle, Elsa, until she fully grasps the art of ice magic."

2. Chapter 2

"Itchy Armpit it is."

The sleek black dragon looked up from the annoyance under his arm to look at the other annoyance. The twenty-two year-old, six-one annoyance. Yes, he loved his rider, (Hiccup was always willing to fly and could usually be bribed or threatened into doing whatever Toothless wanted) but there were times when the boy seemed to forget that being sarcastic while talking to a several hundred pound, fire-breathing death machine was not always the best idea.

Whack.

"Ow! Toothless!" Sated, the dragon returned to the itch that would simply _not go away_. "Oh, yeah? Well try _this_ on for size!"

With a cry, the young man charged the beast, wrapping his arms around its neck and attempting to tackle and be it into submission. Needless to say, the Night Fury was not impressed. Walking on his hind legs, Toothless walked towards the edge of the cliff and the hundred-foot drop that awaited anyone unlucky enough to lose their balance. Needless to say, Hiccup apologized very quickly after that.

The two were soon jerked out of their bonding time together by the arrival of a small, lime green dragon only a foot and a half long.

"Bolt? What're you doing here?" Hiccup, after disentangling himself from his best friend, offered an arm out for the Terrible Terror to perch on. Bolt stretched his head up and pawed at his neck, where a small tube was tied. Hiccup untied the tube while deftly opening a pouch on his flight suit and pulling out a small salted fish, reserved for an occasion just like this. Bolt, now relieved of his burden, happily snatched the fish out of his hand and swallowed it in one gulp. Unravelling the scroll from the tube, Hiccup shot a glance at Toothless, who merely shrugged and laid down to take a nap. Rolling his eyes, Hiccup began to read.

Hiccup,

It's time for you to come home. You've been gone for far too long and this month's Dragon Games are almost over. If you hurry back, you could undoubtedly make it in time for the Sheep Race. Astrid is still favored to win, and if you don't show up, I won't win my bet!

Hiccup rolled his eyes. Of course his dad is more worried about a bet with Gobber than exploring uncharted islands they could never have

possibly reached before. His stomach fell when he read the rest of the letter.

_Also, son, it's time for you to return to your duties. You've been away for over a week now, and we need to get back to your chieftain lessons. I'm not gonna--

Hiccup crinkled up the parchment and threw it away in disgust. Why did Stoick always do this? Just when he got away for a little while, he'd always find a way to bring him back. Try to make him chief.

Toothless nudged Hiccup, obviously worried about his rider.

"I'm fine, bud. It's just time for us to go home."

Toothless, quickly grasping the situation, merely gave Hiccup what he thought was a consoling sigh.

"Oh, well, might as well get a move on." Hiccup said, walking towards the edge from where Toothless had pushed him. "Well, other than this fog, the weather seems to be pretty good today. Only a small cross-breeze. We should make it!" Hiccup's voice trailed off at the sight of a massive column of smoke, seen through a tunnel in the fog. "Toothless, let's go check that out!"

LINEBREAK

Rather than a forest fire like they was expecting, Hiccup and Toothless burst out of the fog and right into what appeared to be a battle between Vikings and dragons.

What!?

"No!" Hiccup murmured. There was no way this kind of battle should be happening. Not that he could do anything, the battle was almost completely over.

A wooden and stone fort burned merrily as its Viking defenders struggled to take down the dragons with a few untouched bows, crossbows, and ballistae. Wherever dragons landed, they were quickly driven off by slightly smaller than average, though still formidable, Vikings.

The dragons, however, were what really drew Hiccup's interest. Although there were only ten of them, the dragons were doing more damage than he had ever thought possible. And rather than the haphazard melee that he was so used to seeing in battles with dragons, these dragons were more organized, flying in small, tight V's, all firing at the same target at the same time. One dragon appeared to be hovering outside of the range of the battle, merely watching the others. But their apparent organization wasn't the worst of it.

"No, no, no!"

Riding atop every dragon was a person.

Dragon riders, intentionally attacking other people.

Only a few seconds later, one of the groups swung around and headed towards Hiccup, while one dragon-rider team from each of the other groups flew towards the other and replaced the three that had just left. Their movements were far too coordinated for this to not have been planned. It was as though they were talking to each other.

But that was impossible.

Hiccup decided that he didn't like the look of the riders, and quickly decided that the ones in the fort must be defending.

When in doubt, help the defenders. He thought.

Whispering the plan to Toothless, Hiccup adjusted the tailfin and together they half-fell, half-flew towards the court. When the dragon riders attempted to intercept them, Toothless shot a plasma blast at them. Quicker than thought, one of the dragons rolled to the side, evading the blast, and then fell back into place. The trio wheeled around to approach him again, this time from the side, but they appeared to hesitate before turning back to resume attacking the fort.

Hiccup flew apart from the riders and approached the fort to help. Unfortunately for Hiccup, however, the Vikings in the ruins of the fort weren't the trusting sort, and as soon as they were within range, several ballistae were fired towards Toothless, launching their nets almost directly into their path.

Hiccup was confused. He was here to help, didn't they know that he wasn't attacking? _No, of course not,_ he mentally face-palmed, _I'm on a dragon. They think I'm with their attackers._

Thinking quickly, Hiccup directed Toothless to try to blast one of the enemy riders off his dragon.

"Just don't kill anyone until we know what's going on, bud."

Five shots and one downed rider later, Hiccup decided that it would be best to try to land again before the riders started coming after him next. Oddly enough, only the three riders who tried to intercept him had reacted to his presence, but they had returned to the fray and were ignoring him. Directing Toothless towards the fort, Hiccup landed in a relatively clear spot, dismounted, and jogged towards a Viking who seemed to be in charge.

"Eret, son of Eret." The Viking introduced himself.

"Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third. Of Berk." Hiccup replied, holding out his hand to be engulfed by Eret's larger, meatier one. "What happened?"

"We were here, at our, er, summer home, when these demons showed up and started blasting everythin' ta bits!" As if to emphasize his point, one of the ballistae, weakened by fire, snapped under the strain of being loaded. Charred splinters flew everywhere, and Hiccup narrowly avoided getting trapped by the weighted net the ballista was loading.

"Well, they certainly don't appear to be attacking now." It was true. Ever since Hiccup had landed, the riders had apparently decided to

retreat to a safe distance and merely circle the fort. "I would like to help you when they come back."

Eret hardly gave it a thought. "Done. Come on, we need to get ready for when they come back."

LINEBREAK

"Incoming!"

Three hours later, the defenders were alerted to the riders' approach by the watchman's call. Hiccup looked up from the ballista he was modifying to shoot three nets at once. Hiccup was grudgingly impressed; these Vikings really knew how to take down dragons.

The riders were coming in low this time, and all in a single V. The one who had originally been by himself was at the tip, leading the others in their charge. As one, they all stood up on their dragons and, staying crouched, drew their assorted weaponry. Hiccup didn't think that any two of them had the same weapon, though he could have been wrong at that distance.

Going with their plan, Hiccup climbed aboard Toothless and together they flew up and behind the ballistae where they hovered.

"Steady ladsâ€¦ Steadyâ€¦" Eret called out, trying to ease the tension and quiet the murmurs.

"FIRE!" Hiccup yelled. Immediately, the three remaining ballistae released their nets, while Toothless let off several plasma blasts in the space of a few seconds. Surprisingly, the dragon riders seemed unfazed by the incoming swarm of fire and rope and flew right into their midstâ€¦ and kept going?

Hiccup could've sworn that he saw one rider hit by at least two plasma blasts, yet they didn't react, it was almost as though the riders weren't there.

But that was impossible.

"Get your weapons, men!" Eret called, sounding oddly eager. "We're gettin' up close and personal with those demons!"

The Vikings quickly abandoned their ballistae and drew their axes, swords, and other Viking essentials. They shifted eagerly from foot to foot, eagerly awaiting their enemy's approach. Hiccup, however, refused to wait, and, drawing his sword, charged forward on Toothless to engage them in the air.

Halfway to the enemy riders, Hiccup began to notice somethingâ€¦odd about them. For one, they were wearing incredibly large, bulky-looking armor that couldn't have weighed any less than a fully-grown Viking. Secondly, the way the dragon directly in front of him (probably a Nightmare, going by the horns) was flying was justâ€¦wrong. Most dragons kept themselves stable and their feet close to their bodies. This one, however, was moving its feet like it was running on the ground, and kept jerking its head up and down.

When Hiccup was only a few seconds from impact, he lit his blade on

fire and swung " straight through the rider's body.

"What the-"

The dragon and rider flew straight through Hiccup and Toothless, as though they weren't even there! Toothless, who had been prepared to grapple with the enemy dragon, began to lose altitude and had to start flapping his wings again to get back up to his previous height.

Wheeling around, Hiccup and Toothless dove straight for the back of the rider again, something must have been off about their approach, however, because once more, the rider ignored the flaming blade that passed straight through his neck while his dragon ignored the unholy offspring of lightning and death that was trying to use his back as a chew toy. It was as though they weren't even there.

But that was impossible.

The rider and his dragon were _right there_. How could they be there, yet at the same time, not be there?

Turning to their right, Hiccup and Toothless flew behind the rest of the riders and tried to stab, slice, or just make contact with them.

Nothing.

"Bud, head back to Eret's group, we need to figure out what's going on." Hiccup murmured in his dragon's ear. Toothless snorted, obviously annoyed at the lack of things to fight. "Alright bud, you need to stop hanging around Vikings for a bit. You're starting to get a little too bloodthirsty, don't you think?"

Toothless whacked Hiccup with his ear flaps, then made a gurgling sound in his throat as if to say, _I've always been like this_.

Unfortunately, the two were so caught up in their "conversation" that they didn't notice the three new figures that were currently facing the Vikings with their weapons drawn, or the two dragons flying just behind Toothless. Of course, that didn't last for very long.

"Hiccup! Turn around!" Eret shouted, shaking Hiccup out of his argument. Hiccup looked down, and was confused by the three figures who were facing confidently and apparently without a care in the world. Wait, turn around? Why-

WHAM

Hiccup and Toothless tumbled down towards the island, barely managing to slow their spiral before they hit the ground hard.

"Ouch!" Hiccup muttered, then leaned forward to check on Toothless. "Hey bud, you okay?"

Toothless growled in response and spun around, searching for what had hit them. It wasn't hard to find.

The dragon standing before them was obviously new, or at least, Hiccup had never seen this kind of dragon before. It was long, like a snake, and easily three times the size of Toothless length-wise. Its scales were a beautiful, deep green and its face seemed almost human, like some old man with Gobber's mustache. Though, mustache aside, its face definitely screamed dragon. The dragon roared, then dove for them, claws outstretched, ready to slice them to bits. Toothless quickly jumped sideways and fired a blast right into the strange dragon's open maw.

Apparently, the dragon was used to it, because it grabbed the fire!? How could it do that!?

"That's impossible!" Hiccup shouted at the dragon, which only grinned in a disturbingly human way in response. "How can you possibly-"

Apparently, the dragon was never taught manners, because it threw the fireball in its hand at Hiccup mid-sentence.

"Oof!"

Thankfully, the fireball had lost a lot of its power, because it hit Hiccup directly in the stomach, sending him tumbling off of Toothless and onto his back.

Toothless, only briefly checking to see if his rider was alright, roared in fury and charged the larger dragon, tackling it the last few feet onto the ground.

Hiccup was quickly distracted from the dragons' fight by an ominous slithering of scales on stone. He whirled around, barely dodging a swipe from a Monstrous Nightmare. Or was it?

This new dragon certainly had the same general shape as a Nightmare, and was the standard crimson-red of the species, but it lacked the multitude of horns and spikes that the species was so proud of. Also, its legs were taller, keeping it further off the ground. Its head was held up high, giving it a sense of regality? Almost as though it was assured victory.

Hiccup was distracted, again, from studying the dragon by the sudden appearance of the dragon's rider, who somersaulted over the dragon's head from its back and charged at Hiccup with a mace in her hand.

Hiccup moved to parry her first strike, but was thrown off guard by the sudden appearance of a dagger in her off hand which she used to stab at his gut. Hiccup jumped backwards and went on the defensive, looking for an opening. Unfortunately, she was rather proficient with her weapons, and Hiccup's training had been limited to Gobber yelling at him to hit harder and faster.

Finally, he saw her swing just a little too high, and he swiped her feet out from under her, causing her to crash sideways onto the ground. He swung his sword down, flat part down, to try to knock her out, but she managed to roll out of the way. She jumped to her feet and charged him. She was too close to use her mace effectively, and she had lost her dagger in the fall, so she tackled Hiccup to the ground.

"What're you _doing_?" She hissed in his face, struggling to keep him pinned down.

Hiccup was caught off guard. "What do you mean, 'what am I doing?' What are _you_ doing attacking people with dragons? All the clans-oof!-signed a pact not to use dragons to fight, yet here you are, in complete violation of the treaty-"

"We never signed a pact!" She interrupted. "I've never heard of this pact, and besides, we're not Vikings!"

"Then why are you here?" Hiccup questioned, pausing momentarily. She opened her mouth to reply when he started struggling again. "Whatever the reason, you have no right to attack anyone here!"

"What do you mean, no reason? If anyone shouldn't be a part of this battle, it should be you! I mean, if you even knew _anything_ about them, you'd be helping _us_."

This gave Hiccup pause. "What do you mean? You just attacked these people out of the blue for no-"

She cut him off again. "Hiccup, do you even know what these people _are_?"

"Vikings. And I understand that most people don't like us, but come on, you can't just attack people you don't-"

"Hiccup, they're dragon trappers."

Hiccup stared up at her dumbly. Then managed to squeak out "Oh."

"Yeah. So, if we're done here, can you please leave us alone to go about our business?"

Hiccup thought about it for a moment. She could be lying to him, but that seemed doubtful. And it would explain why these Vikings had nets instead of bolts and were trying to capture instead of kill the dragons.

"Fine. But I'm helping. I don't quite trust you people yet. I'm going to make sure things don't get too out of hand."

She looked at him for a moment before bursting out laughing in his face.

"HAHAHAHA! You seriously think that you could stop us? Oh, that's great! AHAHAHA!"

Hiccup glared at her, annoyed that she thought so lowly of him. He was about to give her a piece of his mind when he remembered that there were ten of them. He slid his eyes away from her glare and grunted.

"Fine. But I'll still try."

She grinned down at him. "Wouldn't expect anything else from Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third." She said as she got off of

him.

Hiccup was immediately wary of her again. "What? How do you know my name?"

She merely grinned and offered him a hand up, which he eyed warily. She rolled her eyes. "You're pretty important here in the Viking Archipelago, and if you're going to war somewhere you should probably know the important people there, right?"

Hiccup was stunned at her declaration of intent, but took her hand. She was here to wage war? Against whom? And wasn't she a little—| young? Hiccup hadn't really noticed before, but she was, if anything, younger than he was. Granted, she couldn't have been any younger than seventeen, but still.

"Now come on, Hiccup. We need to get those trappers before—"

"Before what, kid?" Hiccup and the girl whirled to face Eret, son of Eret, who was standing just a little ways off while his comrades surrounded the pair. Hiccup looked all over for Toothless, only to find him under a net next to the weird snake-like dragon. "Now what do you think you're doing, Hiccup? Gettin' all chummy with the enemy?"

"I know what you are, Eret! I know what you do! You're a dragon trapper!" Hiccup shouted at them.

Eret feigned shock. "Oh no, boys! The little boy has figured us out! Whatever shall we do?" At this point he began skipping around the two teens like a demented idiot, drawing laughter from his men. "Maybe we should run away from the four tiny little teenagers and their tied up little lizards." His voice slowly dropped until he was practically growling at the two. Then he brightened up. "Oh, well. Might as well bring you four to Drago as well. It's not much of a haul, but at least your dragons make up for the ones you set free."

Then he whirled around and walked away, calling over his shoulder to his men. "Knock 'em out and throw 'em on the ship! We leave at dawn!"

Hiccup threw a glance at the girl, while she threw one at him. This was not part of the plan. Then her eyes widened at something behind him. "Hiccup! Look—"

CRUNCH

Then everything went dark.

3. Chapter 3

Outside the Council chambers

Hans watched the princess pace back and forth nervously. For the past ten minutes, she had been going through the same motion. Pace back and forth, press ear up to door. Pace back and forth, press ear up to door. To be honest, he was starting to get annoyed. She was so energetic that he was beginning to think that he had seduced the wrong sister. At least the other one showed some signs of

restraint.

But now some stranger from Greece had shown up and seduced the Queen instead. He had been told that Queen Elsa had no interest in a relationship. The rumors he had heard had said that she had asked for the gates to be closed. Ah, well. Just one more body to add to the count. Unfortunately, he looked like he could handle himself in a fight. It was going to be hard to-

"Hans? Are you alright?" He jerked his head up, realizing he had begun to scowl whilst in his thoughts. He quickly forced a smile onto his face.

"Sorry, sorry. Just, ah, trying to remember a riddle that's been driving me crazy." He lied, hoping she wouldn't try to "help" him. Thankfully, she was too hung up on trying to eavesdrop on the conversation inside the room to really care. As she began pacing back and forth again, Hans tried to resist rolling his eyes. "You know, worrying isn't going to do much. Unless you're trying to dig a hole in the floor, in which case I could probably help out." He said, putting on his best Prince Charming impersonation.

"Sorry, I'm just-"

"Worried?" He asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Yeah. Like, what if she's in trouble and she can't tell me?"

He cracked a grin, knowing exactly where the sisters' real trouble was. "What? Queen less than a day and she's already dealing with criminals? Come on, Anna. Do you truly believe that?"

She shook her head, if anything more worried than before. "Not that. What if he's, I don't know, threatening her? Blackmailing her, or trying to seduce her to-"

He cut her off before she thought about whether he might be doing that. "Now Anna, your sister will be just fine. She's the Queen. I'm quite confident that she can take care of herself. Now come one, we should go back to-"

Hans was cut off by the council doors opening, almost knocking over Anna who had, once again, been leaning up against it. Out walked Gray, who appeared completely unperturbed by the duo's presence outside the room. Elsa, however, was very surprised, and it showed.

"Anna! Prince Hans! What are you two doing? I thought you were going to dance and talk? Why are you here?"

"Queen Elsa, if I may explain?" She nodded at Hans to continue. "We were dancing, per your suggestion, and then I asked Anna if she would like to take a walk to the gardens to get some air. She agreed, and we were just on our way back to the party."

Queen Elsa nodded, then said, "She dragged you here to try to eavesdrop, didn't she?"

Hans' mouth went slack, while Anna tried to stifle a giggle. How did she-

"The gardens are on the other side of the castle from the ballroom." Anna stage-whispered. Even the normally emotionless Gray cracked a smile at that.

"Ah. In that case, I'd like to be quiet now before I make a bigger fool of myself." Hans said, amused despite himself.

Elsa opened her mouth to speak, but Anna beat her to it. "Permission denied. Come on, Elsa, we need to talk about the _wedding_." She shot a look at Hans, who realized that it was his turn to speak up.

"Right. Your Majesty, we humbly, once again, ask for your permission to be married." He declared, dropping into a deep bow. Anna saw and also dropped into a curtsy, but almost fell over. Thankfully, Hans managed to get an arm around her before she hit the floor.

Gray's grin was now stretching from ear-to-ear, amused by the interaction of the two lovers. Of course, where this conversation was going had nothing to do with him, but it was still amusing.

Gray decided to excuse himself. "Your Majesties, Prince Hans." He said, bowing. "I should excuse myself now. My Lady," He said, turning towards Elsa. "I shall return to the castle tomorrow, so that we can begin working."

Elsa nodded, a smile ghosting across her lips. "That would be wonderful, Mr. Marshall. Should I not see you before the end of the party, have a good night."

"And you as well, my Lady."

Gray turned and strode away, planning to grab some food and head back to his ship. Hopefully the twins hadn't gotten in any trouble while he was away.

As soon as Gray was out of sight and hearing range, Anna whirled on her sister. "Elsa, are you okay? I was so worried, did he do anything? Is there something you need? Should I have the soldiers boot him out of town? Should I get you some food? Are you alright? Are you-"

Elsa waved her hands in a vain attempt to stop the flood of questions, but she was laughing. "Anna, enough, nothing bad happened. Mr. Marshall was very nice, and agreed to help me with a littleâ€¦ problem."

Anna thought about what they had talked about earlier. "Elsa! What did he have to say about dad? Was it anything important? What was dad's-"

Elsa cut her off again. "Don't worry, Anna, Mr. Marshall is here to help with a little problem we've been having. It has to do with why we closed the gates." (Good thing that wasn't a lie) "He seems confident that, after we fix the problem, we can tell people. But_ not_ before, alright?"

"Fine, I'll let it go for now, but I _will_ find out." Anna threatened. Now that she had checked that Elsa was alright and tried

to find out about the mysterious Mr. Gray Marshall, Anna decided to turn to the important things. "Now, Elsa, about our wedding-"

Once more, Elsa cut her off. "I said no, Anna." Anna opened her mouth to complain, but Elsa continued. "However, as of now I see no reason as to why you two can't get married." Anna and Hans both smiled, Anna jumping forward to wrap her arms around her sister, squealing happily.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, Elsa!" She whirled around to find Hans and jumped into his arms, laughing as he wrapped her up in a bear hug.

"_But_," Elsa continued, well aware of how strenuous the following conversation was going to be.

"But?" Anna asked, confused. Then her eyes lit up in recognition. "Oh, Elsa, of course you can be my bridesmaid!"

"Wait, what? No, Anna-"

"It will be great! That color looks really good on you, but we'll need something that complements your hair more. Oh, and your _eyes_. We need something to go with them. And-"

"No, Anna, just wait for a second, okay?" Elsa said, desperate to stop Anna before she got too far gone. "Look, I have a few rules first before you two get married. I suppose that they're more like tests, I suppose, but still. First off, you can't get married for at least six months. Secondly, you-"

"Wow, wow, wow. Wait. You just said that we could get married." Anna said, growing frustrated. And besides, six months!? No way!

"No, Anna, I said I saw no reason why not. And I truly don't, but the way I see it, there are some problems that need to be fixed, and then you two can get married, I _promise_, alright?"

Anna looked at her, then grudgingly nodded in agreement. Besides, with their parents gone, she needed her sister's permission to get married and it would be better not to elope.

Elsa let out a sigh of relief and grinned at her sister, thankful that they wouldn't argue as much as she had expected. "Now look, Anna, you just recently met this guy. I understand that you think that it is true love, but I want you two to really, _truly_ know him before you two get married. So, I want you to wait just a few months. Get to know each other, and after six months, if you still feel the same way, _then_ you two can get married, alright?"

Anna considered this, and obviously wanted to argue, but saw the logic. "Fine, we'll wait. But what were the other reasons?"

Elsa nodded, knowing that the hard part was over. "Just one other, it's the reason was why Mr. Marshall was here. I just have a small problem that will hopefully be taken care of before your six months are up, alright?"

"Is it the problem that had to do with Dad?"

Elsa sighed, she hated not telling her sister, and though most of her was longing to tell Anna everything, her rational mind stopped her, reminding her of the last time she had shared her power with her sister.

Elsa drew in a shaky breath, bringing up her right hand to grasp it under her chin. Quickly pushing those thoughts from her mind, Elsa was about to respond when Anna beat her to it.

"Elsa? Where'd you get that glove? I was going to give you this one back, but apparently you don't need it."

Elsa started, having completely forgotten about the replacement glove Mr. Marshall had given her.

Flashback (Inside the Council Chambers)

"Uh, uh, I don't really know how to, uh..." Elsa silently cursed, she was a Queen! She was supposed to be far more eloquent than that.

Gray merely shot her a sly grin and slid into a chair across from her. "It's alright, take your time. I've got all the time in the world."

To say Elsa was surprised in his sudden change in attitude would be an understatement. He had just gone from strict, military precision that would make a drill sergeant weep to casual teenager in less time it took for Anna to change subject on a sugar rush. If he wasn't dressed in his ice armor, complete with leering wolf-head, Elsa would have considered him to be a young man who had never bothered to grow up. He lay on the chair sideways, throwing both his legs over one arm of the chair while leaning his back over the other. Meanwhile, Gray's grin never fell from his face.

"Surprised?" She could only nod in mute agreement. He shrugged, "I've made my introductions and told you why your father hired us. There's no reason for me to continue being like some kind of-" he waved his arm around as if trying to grab a word from the air. "Wall. Besides, with your history with magic, you're going to need something more than some sergeant yelling at you, right?"

Elsa nodded, though she began to doubt if she could trust him. After all, he wasn't exactly consistent with his attitude. On the other hand, he did seem more approachable. Oh well, what did she have to lose? She stood up, reaching out with her right hand before noticing that she was still missing her glove. Almost immediately, she brought it back to her side, nearly shoving it under the table and instead offering her left hand. This, unfortunately, did not go unnoticed on Gray, who raised an eyebrow as he rose. Then he, cruelly in Elsa's opinion, brought his right hand forward in an offer to shake Elsa's. Elsa glared at his smirking face.

"Please don't." She asked. As infuriating as he was, he was also being very kind to offer to teach her. It wouldn't be very good if she froze her teacher before their lessons even began. She was jerked out of her thoughts by Gray's laugh.

"It's going to take a lot more than just a handshake to hurt me, Your Majesty." Elsa decided that she didn't like him saying her title in

such a carefree manner.

"That's not the problem." She got out through her clenched teeth. "I haveâ€¦ restraint issues. I'm missing my gloves, which normally help me conceal my powers."

Gray continued grinning, not lowering his hand. "And I told you, it's going to take more than a handshake to hurt me." At Elsa's insistent, pleading stare he finally relented, his grin falling from his face. "Fine," He waved his hand, but kept it outstretched, instead turning it palm-up. "You can wear your gloves for another two weeks. By then, I expect you to be bare-handed in your day-to-day tasks. Now, let me see your hand."

Elsa was hesitant, but complied, placing her hand inside of his, his gauntlet of ice dissipating as her hand drew near his. He grabbed her hand, and ice began to flow along his arm to cover her hand. A small cloud of mist formed around her hand, but soon dissipated, revealing a rather basic glove. Granted, it was as white as snow and completely flawless, but lacked the decoration his armor had demonstrated. Elsa considered asking about it, but decided not to look a gift horse in the mouth.

"Thank you." She said, feeling much more relieved with her hand covered once more. Gray merely breathed out in annoyance.

"Whatever. Now, let's get back to the party. I have to have some of this chocolate I've heard so much about, and you have a wedding to plan with your sister." He sent a wolfish grin over his shoulder at Elsa. "Or did you think you'd get out of it?"

Elsa immediately froze, barely suppressing a groan. In her eagerness to learn how she might control her powers, she had completely forgotten about Anna managing to find a man _and_ get engaged in less than a day. She sighed.

"I don't suppose you could help me out with this?" She asked, half-sarcastic yet half-hopeful he would offer a solution. He paused, his hand halfway to the door-handle. He turned around to face her.

"Queen Elsa, I was hired by your father to provide any assistance I could. While that was taken under the context of mastering your powers, I am technically bound by contract to help you with all your problems. So here's the question: is that request serious, or a joke?" He cracked a grin. "I honestly couldn't tell."

Elsa almost hugged him. "Please!" She said, almost stumbling over her words. "I would love your help. I just don't know what to do." She looked down at the floor. "They look so happy, but Iâ€¦ sheâ€¦ We hardly know him! Besides, until I get my powers under control, there's no way they could live here. Never mind his thirteen brothers!"

"Twelve."

"Excuse me?"

Gray flopped back down into his seat, gesturing to Elsa to do the same. She did so in a more controlled, professional manner. "He's the

thirteenth in line, so twelve brothers. He also has an unknown number of sisters, but from the way he talks I don't believe he has any."

Elsa nodded slowly, remembering that Anna had mentioned a number, but she was going too fast for Elsa to fully understand. "Alright, fine. The point is, until I can control my powers, no one is moving in."

Gray nodded. "Of course. That could be very awkward, accidentally freezing your brother-in-law's brothers."

"But what can I _do_?" Elsa asked, verging on panic.

"Well," Gray started, considering. "What I understand is that you need three things to happen before you'll approve the marriage. One: master your ice powers. We'll be taking care of that, so no need to worry too much, it'll only take time. Two: learn about Hans. Neither of you have ever met him, so-" Gray paused, then turned to look at the door.

"What is it? What's-" Gray held up a hand to stop her, then peered closer at the door. Finally he grinned.

"Nothing." He said, waving a hand at the door as he turned back to Elsa. "Nothing significant, your sister is just waiting outside, trying to listen in."

Elsa was surprised. How could he tell just from looking at the door? She made a mental note to ask him about that during one of their lessons.

"Anyway, learning about Hans. I'd say give it a few months. I'm sure you'll like him, but it'll take time before you're used to having him around. I'd recommend inviting _just_ him to stay around the castle for, say, three months before you approve of the marriage. By then we'll be wrapping up your training in time for you to have guests for an extended period of time."

Elsa nodded. This all made sense, and Anna couldn't deny her time to get to know Hans. Besides, Anna needed to get to know Hans too. A day was _not_ enough time to learn about her possible fiancé. Then she recalled something.

"You said three things."

Gray shifted uncomfortably in his seat. "Yeah, well, seeâ€¦ I don't think you're going to exactly like this."

This got Elsa's attention. She hadn't seen Gray uncomfortable, heck she didn't even think that it was possible. "Oh? And that would be becauseâ€¦?"

"Now, please understand that I'm just used to looking at things from a military perspective. I tend to think of everyone, even random strangers on the streets as possible enemies, so please just _don't_ get mad._"

Elsa slowly nodded. "Okâ€¦ I promise."

"I'd recommend spying on Hans."

Elsa blinked. Twice. "WHAT!?"

"Ah, geez."

"WHY would I spy on Hans!? For what reason would I spy on my sister's love!? He's a prince from a foreign nation! He isn't some criminal, or street thug, or even a thief like our cousin married! I WILL NOT SPY ON-"

"ENOUGH!" Roared Gray, anger evident in the fact that his fist had dented the solid oaken table. Badly dented. "You said that you would not get mad. So listen." He hissed, slowly regaining his cool. He took a deep breath. "Prince Hans is the thirteenth in line for his own country's throne. Now, most likely he would be given a small territory to rule over, as per tradition. In order for him to be king, however, he would have to either outlive his twelve brothers and their bloodlines, or he can marry into the throne in a foreign country. Now I'm not saying that he's doing it for the power. He could very well love your sister, but from a completely paranoid perspective where everyone has the worst intentions, he's going to marry Anna and kill you. Just have your country's spy network learn about why he came here rather than any of his brothers, then learn why he's wooing your sister. Then you can sleep at night knowing that he loves her and she loves him and yadda yadda yadda, rainbows and sunshine."

Elsa, though angry at his audacity to silence her, agreed that this was all for the best. Then she began to think. "Alright, so I check out Prince Hans to find out if he is truly in love with her. What about you?"

Gray looked at her, confused. "Huh?"

She smiled at him, tauntingly. "How do I know you're who you say you are? You have presented no proof that you are who you say you are. How do I know you're telling the truth?"

Gray looked at her, unable to tell if she was pulling his leg, or actually serious. He decided to cover all his bases. "Queen Elsa, as proof that I'm capable of teaching you I would like to point out the fact that I'm wearing armor made of ice. As for my credentials, if your information system can find the Guild, then you'll have the best spies in the world. Other than that, not much I can do for you. However," He grinned, and Elsa noticed for the first time the larger-than-normal canines that protruded from his mouth. "If you feel you can't trust me, I'd be more than happy to leave you to your own devices."

Elsa immediately backpedaled, trying to salvage the situation. "NO! No, no. It was just a joke! I believe you! Really!"

Gray snorted, grinning even wider. "Really, Your Majesty. You should be more resilient to threats than that. A Queen can never be too much of a pushover, lest other people take advantage of that."

Elsa glared and Gray laughed harder.

Once he had composed himself, Gray stood up, his armor dissipating

into a mist that rolled off his body. "Well then, My Lady. Shall we go greet your sister?"

Elsa stood, prepared herself, then went around the table and opened the door.

End Flashback

"Uh, er," Elsa tried to come up with something on the spot, but couldn't think of anything believable.

Anna peered closer at Elsa. "Elsa? Is everything alright? You seem a little confused."

"Ah, no, I'm alright. Just a littleâ€¦ tired, is all." She smiled sheepishly at Anna. "Maybe I should go to bed."

Just then, a maid came running up. "Queen Elsa! You're late for your speech! Everyone is wondering where you've gone."

Elsa froze. Just how long had she been talking with Gray? She looked around for a clock, and when she saw the one in the hallway, she wished she hadn't. She whirled around to face the maid.

"Take me back to the party." She turned back to face Anna. "Sorry, I guess I have to go." Then she turned and walked as fast as possible after the servant while still maintaining her posture.

Hans frowned inwardly as he watched Elsa's retreating figure. She had seemed so against their marriage, yet one conversation with this Gray Marshall had completely changed her mind, disposition, and even part of her wardrobe! Thankfully, he had the presence of mind not to growl out loud. Though he certainly wanted to.

"Come on, Hans!" Hans was brought out of his thoughts by Anna latching onto his arm and dragging him down the hall. "We're going to miss Elsa's speech!"

Linebreak

Gray was about half-way through the courtyard when Elsa's speech began. He stopped and decided it would be best to listen to the entire thing. He stopped and turned, only to notice a flash of crimson uniform out of the corner of his eye. He turned a bit more and was met with a small, white-haired man who reminded him of a small chimp. Flanking the small man were two large, gorilla-looking thugs. Gray frowned.

"Hello, sir." The small man greeted. "The Duke of Wesselton, at your service." Gray remained silent, waiting to hear the man's reason for approaching. When he saw Gray wouldn't be responding any time soon, the man continued. "I'd just like to say that, judging by your clothes, you're from a ratherâ€¦ distant country."

Gray nodded, failing to see where this was headed.

"Now, Wesselton enjoys very close trading relations with a great many countries. Now, judging by yourâ€¦ attire, I would hazard a guess as to your exports and imports. Now, you live somewhere warm, almost tropical I'd say, soâ€¦"

The chimp rambled on for a few minutes about imports, exports, and trade routes before Gray decided he couldn't take it anymore. "Sir, stop." Almost immediately, the rambling stopped. "Now, sir, I am not a diplomat or merchant. I'm a mercenary, so I really could not care less about trade. Now, if you'll excuse me, I'd like to hear the Queen's speech."

Gray turned back towards the dais that had been set up for Elsa and began listening again. She was talking about her plans for the upcoming spring, but he didn't get to hear much.

"A mercenary, eh?"

Freaking monkey, why was he still here?

"If I were to ask if you were looking for a job, how would you respond?"

That caught Gray's attention. Why was this guy, a guest, looking for a mercenary? Surely he had brought people to do work for him.

"I would ask what it was."

Gray could feel the man's smile, and it was creepy. "I need someone to find out, through any means necessary, about why the castle gates have been closed. I need more than just rumors, and if I can get concrete dirt on Arendelle that would help during trade negotiations, I'd be willing to pay quite handsomely."

And once again, Gray was reminded how much he hated politicians. He sighed, deciding on what to do with this information. He opted for the straight forward approach.

"Mr. Duke of Weasel Town," He started, ignoring the outraged look on the chimp's face, "I am currently in the employ of the Royal Family of Arendelle." He felt the Duke stiffen and allowed himself a smirk. "I also happen to take loyalty quite seriously, so I'm afraid you're quite out of luck. Now," He turned, looking the chimp dead in the eyes. "You can leave quietly, or I can escort you out personally." He formed his spear of ice in his hand to prove his point. Unfortunately, the people of the North were apparently unused to magic.

"W-W-WITCH!" The Duke screamed, terrified out of his wits as he dove behind his two thugs. Immediately, the crowd backed away from Gray, obviously afraid of his power.

Gray looked at his spear, as though it might answer him. "Oh, was I not supposed to do that?"

4. Chapter 4

A/N: Hey, so I've never read the HTTYD books, so I apologize if Cami is a little OOC. Other than that, I like to think that I've done a pretty good job with everything. Well no matter the case, please R&R.

Hiccup awoke to a headache and voices deciding his fate. He tried to

force his eyes open, but they seemed unwilling to comply.

"Great, and now he's waking up." A man's gruff voice sounded from somewhere to his right. "I still think we should leave him. If he hadn't gotten involved-

"Oh, hush," A female voice said from his left. She sounded strangely familiar. "He's a rider, we can't just leave him. Besides, he was just confused. We appeared to be the attackers, so he helped the people he thought were in trouble. He could be useful, another guide if you will."

"And what's wrong with me?" Another female voice said from his right, very close to him. "Am I not good enough for you? I think I did quite well without any powers."

The man's voice rang out again. "Fine, we'll let him go. But we're keeping Cami. She's been a big help and proven herself capable. This guy got beaten by you, so he can't be that good of a fighter. We'll get out and let him go, but he's not coming with us."

Hiccup finally managed to open his eyes. He tried to rub them, but his hands got caught on- oh, geez.

Hiccup was chained to a wall, and next to him was a blonde-haired girl who shared a small resemblance to Astrid, but not enough of a resemblance to be mistaken to her. She rolled her eyes at a man who was sitting further along the wall, fiddling with his chains.

"Please, Arkalen. It was closer to a tie than a win. He almost had Jasmine at least once." She turned to Hiccup and grinned. "Hey there, the names Camicazi, heir to the Bog Burglars. You can call me Cami."

Hiccup decided that she was a little too chipper for being locked up in a cell. He turned to his right and saw the girl whom he had fought also chained to the wall. She had her eyes closed and appeared to be concentrating. He quickly remembered his manners and moved to offer his hand to Cami.

"My names Hiccup, heir to the Vikings of Berk." Cami nodded, as though she knew this already, which she probably did.

"Yep, we know. Anyway, that over there's Arkalen, he rides Clefspeare, a dragon from the Isles of Briton. That there is Jasmine, she rides Jade, a dragon from China."

Hiccup recalled something about China from a book on Trader Johann's ship. It was incredibly far east. Were dragons everywhere? Before he could ask any questions, Jasmine's eyes shot open.

"Arkalen, the dragons are ready. Time for us to leave."

Arkalen grinned, and his cuffs fell to the ground, looking as though they had just fallen apart. Hiccup looked at his own, but they were still fairly new, not old enough to just fall apart like that. What was going on?

Arkalen stood up, revealing himself to be shorter than Hiccup had

first guessed, even shorter than Hiccup. And that wasn't all.

"How old are you?" Hiccup blurted out, only clamping his mouth shut once it was too late.

Arkalen whirled around from where he was fiddling with Jasmine's chains. Some kind of black energy swirling around his clenched fist.

"What did you-" He started to growl before getting cut off by Jasmine's arms thrown around his neck.

"That's enough, Arkalen. He didn't mean anything by it." She placated, before turning to glare at Hiccup. "He's rather sensitive about his, uhâ€¦" She appeared to search for a word before grasping an apparently acceptable one. "Apparent age."

Hiccup looked at Arkalen, then back at Jasmine, then back at Arkalen. Then he shrugged. "Whatever, I suppose there're worse things than an egotistic nine-year-old."

"That's it!" Arkalen shouted, attempting to lunge at Hiccup before being dragged back by Jasmine.

"Stop it!" Jasmine shouted. Arkalen continued to glare at Hiccup before wrenching out of Jasmine's grasp and turning his attention on Camicazi. Jasmine turned her gaze back on Hiccup, and if looks could killâ€¦ "You're going to understand how very wrong you are as soon as we get our supplies. And I will not be able to hold him back when we do. So try not to anger him again, got it?"

"Okay, okay, sorry." Hiccup sighed, looking over at Camicazi in time to see her chains fall to the ground, old and rusted just like Arkalen's and Jasmine's had. "Hey, how are you doing that? That doesn't make any sense. I saw those chains just a few seconds ago and they were barely a year old. Now they're old and rusted. There's no way that's possible."

Arkalen looked at Jasmine. "Do we have to bring him? I really think we'd be better off without him."

Jasmine shook her head. "We already decided that we're taking him. Besides, it's not like we're taking him with us. Once we're out of here, he's heading back home and we're heading the rest of the way to this Drago Bludfist."

"Fine, but don't expect me to be happy about it." As he said that, Arkalen held his hand out, palm up, and mimed grabbing something. That something materialized in a ball of blackâ€¦ destruction was probably the best word for it. It seemed to promise pain and death. "Don't worry, this won't hurt." He said, then considered the ball in his hand, then corrected himself. "Much."

"Arkalenâ€¦" Hiccup, who had been trying to squirm out of the reach of Arkalen's outstretched hand, looked over to see Jasmine glaring pointedly at him.

"What? It's true! It would have removed the chains and not hurt nearly as much as if I used a sword." At Jasmine's continued glare, he sighed and relented. "Fine, but for the record, he would have been

much more cooperative without his hands." He tossed the ball over his shoulder, where it hit (on purpose or accident, Hiccup couldn't tell) the door handle spot-on. It flared briefly, then disappeared, revealing a hole the size of the ball where the handle had been. Hiccup gulped.

"You can move your arms now." Arkalen said, apparently done already with whatever he was doing with Hiccup's chains. Hiccup looked up to see that the cuffs which had been so strong just a minute ago were now basically dust, and offered little resistance to his arms' tugging. Damn, he had been so distracted by the little ball of destruction that he hadn't paid any attention to what Arkalen did. Oh well, he'd find out once they got off the ship.

"Alright, what's the plan?"

"You shut up and stay quiet." Hiccup tried to keep a straight face at Arkalen's voice. It was actually pretty creepy to hear a man's voice coming out of a nine-year-old's body. Said nine-year-old apparently noticed his trouble. "I can't wait to get my stuff back." He muttered to Jasmine. "Nobody ever takes me seriously like this."

Jasmine nodded, having trouble keeping a straight face herself. "I know what you mean, oh great Lord of Destruction."

Arkalen groaned. "Oh, come one! Are you still bringing that up?! That was _ages_ ago!"

Hiccup, very confused, looked to Camicazi for an explanation. She shrugged, obviously as confused as he was.

Arkalen whirled around. "Whatever! I'll go up front, Jasmine behind me, then Cami and that lump of uselessness."

Hiccup growled, angry at being called useless, but decided against it for two reasons. One, they didn't know about his history of being called Hiccup the Useless. Two, he decided that he would stop annoying the nine-year-old with the creepy powers.

Jasmine saw him stiffen at being called useless and placed a comforting hand on his shoulder. "Don't worry, he isn't normally like this. He's just a bitâ€¦ upset with his current form." Before Hiccup could ask what she meant by that, footsteps sounded just outside the door. Acting quickly, the three riders dove to either side of the doorframe, leaving Hiccup alone in the center of the room. He stood up, trying to follow them, only for his legs to trip him up.

Thump.

Hiccup hit the ground hard. Looking down, he saw that his legs were chained together as well. "Oh, come on!" He muttered. He reached for the chains just as two of Eret's crew walked into the room.

"See? I told you the door was- Hey!" One of them stopped midsentence when he saw the lack of chained prisoners. "Where'd they go?" Then his gaze fell on Hiccup alone on the floor. "Hey, you there! Where'd the other ones go?" He strode forward to grab Hiccup by the throat and pin him to the wall. Unfortunately, he was so distracted with intimidating Hiccup, he failed to notice his friend getting jumped by

an angry nine-year-old. If Hiccup wasn't so focused on the lack of oxygen, he might have been impressed that Arkalen was even capable of being quiet. As it was, he was probably going to black out again.

As his vision tunneled, Hiccup saw a flash of blue behind the crewman. Whatever it was apparently knocked out the guy choking Hiccup, because they both crumpled to the floor, Hiccup drawing in deep breaths while the crewman lay with his eyes rolled back into his head.

"-alright?" Hiccup shook his head, trying to clear the ringing from his ears. Then he looked up to see Jasmine's eyes peering down at him. The oxygen deprivation must have been getting to him, because her eyes appeared to be glowing a light blue, like frost.

"Are you alright?" She asked again. Hiccup just nodded, still disturbed by her eyes. She grinned in relief, then offered him a hand up, which he gratefully accepted.

"Are your eyes-"

"Blue? Yeah, I'm a telepath. The glowing blue eyes are just an annoying side effect. They should go back to normal in a bit."

Hiccup just nodded in dumb shock. When he could finally force words out of his mouth, he managed "Tele-what?"

Jasmine sighed and opened her mouth to explain, but was cut off by Arkalen.

"It doesn't matter, does it?" He growled finally finished looting the unconscious bodies of the two guards. "We're getting rid of him as soon as we get our dragons, so don't bother telling him. Now let's _go_."

Jasmine gave an apologetic shrug, then turned and followed Arkalen out the door. Camicazi moved to follow them, but turned around when Hiccup didn't follow.

"Look, I know they seem a little edgy, but they're really nice people." She said, shuffling her feet a bit. "You just need to get to know them a bit."

"Uh, Camicazi?"

"I mean, Arkalen is almost never like this. He's just a bit worn out from using so much energy during the battle."

"Camicazi."

"Well, that and his form. He isn't normally like that, either. He's just a bit annoyed. I mean, the first time _I_ saw him like that, I was beyond confused."

"Camicazi."

"Now, I mean, I haven't known them for very long myself, only two to three months, but still, could you give them a shot?"

"Camicazi."

"I just think you'd all get along really well if you knew more, even with Arkalen. You guys could probably even be--"

"CAMICAZI!"

Cami was startled by Hiccup's outburst, and gave him a confused look. He gestured to his feet in reply.

"Kinda still tied up, here."

Camicazi decided to stop her blabbering before she embarrassed herself even more. Quickly, she reached into her hair and pulled out a few small pieces of metal. Hiccup was confused.

"Why didn't you use that earlier?"

Cami shrugged. "Arkalen needed to blow off some steam. Besides, I was a little tied up."

"Oh, right." Hiccup was starting to feel like an idiot around these people, which he had hoped had stopped happening for good after the fight with the Red Death all those years back. "Hey, Camicazi?"

The girl sighed. "Hiccup, just call me Cami. I don't like my full name anymore."

Hiccup nodded. "Okay. Cami. Could you possibly explain everything that's going on? I really don't understand any of this."

Cami closed her eyes for a few seconds, then opened them. "Yeah, sure, Jasmine will take care of everything, and Arkalen is going to be busy until he runs out of heads to bash. So, what do you want to know?"

"Everything. I mean, who are you people? I know that you're a bog burglar, that kid is from Briton, and the other girl is from China, but why are you all here? Jasmine? I think her name was? Mentioned that you were here for a war? Why? And what's with the crazy black stuff Arkalen keeps throwing everywhere?"

Cami sighed and closed her eyes. For almost a whole minute, Hiccup sat while she apparently collected her thoughts. Then she opened her eyes and spoke.

"First things first: I'm not all too familiar with the situation myself. I only just met them a few months ago, but from my understanding, they're free-lancers."

"Free-what?" Hiccup didn't recall any of them carrying lances.

"Free-lancers. Kinda like mercs, but it's just them. They don't have a boss or comrades, it's just the two of them."

"Alright, I guess. But that doesn't explain--"

Cami cut him off. "Don't worry, I'm getting there. I don't understand

the whole mission myself, but from my understanding, they're here to stop some crazy warlord who's raising an army of dragons."

Hiccup nodded. "Do you know who hired them? If they're mercenaries then they must have someone who paid them to fight this, er, warlord. Do we even have warlords here?"

Cami just shrugged. "It's a guy who's raising an army of dragons to enslave the entire Archipelago. I think that "warlord" is the best description. As for who hired them, wellâ€¦ I don't think that you'd believe me."

If nothing else piqued Hiccup's interest, that did. "Try me."

"Dragons."

â€¦

"You're right, I don't believe you."

"Hiccup!"

"What? It's true! How would you even communicate with the dragons? The most I can get out of Toothless is emotions, not an entire sentence!"

"Yeah, this is where things get even weirderâ€¦"

Hiccup's mouth cracked the floorboards. "Weirder than talking dragons!?"

Cami shuffled a little uncertainly. "Er, wellâ€¦ Jasmine's a telepath."

â€¦

"A what?"

"A telepath."

Hiccup thought about that for a little, then nodded sagely. "I have no idea what you're talking about."

Cami face-palmed. "A telepath is someone who can communicate with others through their thoughts. Like, without talking."

Hiccup thought about this. "So, is that how she knew that the dragons were ready?"

"Yep."

"And you were talking to her just now?"

"Yep."

Hiccup was starting to get excited now. "And how you were all able to fly so well together?"

"Nope."

If Hiccup wasn't already sitting down, he would have fallen over from shock. "But you were all flying so well together. You shouldn't have been able to do that without talking to each other!"

"Yeah, wellâ€¦ those people don't exist."

It took Hiccup a few minutes to process this. It would have taken longer, but his mind had shut down to conserve power. When it finally started working again, he managed one word. "What?"

Cami let out a timid laugh. "Heheh. Yeah, well, we needed more people to help attack, so Arkalen created some people and dragons to help out with the attack. But sustaining that many objects for so long really took its toll. It's part of why he's so tired."

Hiccup looked at the hole in the door and the broken handcuffs. _Tired? What kind of a kid was this?_

Apparently he was making a funny face, because Cami laughed at it. "Yeah, he's a regular monster when he's at full power."

Hiccup's brain was threatening to shut down again.

"Alright, Hiccup, ready to go?" She reached down to offer him a hand. "We've got some dragons to grab and a warlord to hunt."

****A/N:** So, uh, sorry for the wait. I've been trying to update faster but I'm apparently watching too much anime for that to happen, soâ€¦ yeah. In other news, please give feedback on OC's, we'll meet the dragons and Arkalen's specific power will be unveiled next chapter, so in the meantime please R&R. Next chapter will be back to Frozen. And don't worry, only about 4-6 chapters before I'm getting Hiccup to meet with Elsa.**

5. Chapter 5

"Oh, come on!" Gray groaned. "Even in Salem they got this right! Females are witches, males are wizards. Or warlocks. It's all a matter of preference, I suppose. Could you at least get the gender right?"

The little monkey of a man tripped over himself backing away, and landed with a splash in a fountain. "M-m-m-m-MONSTER!"

Gray pointed his spear right at the Duke, announcing in a loud voice, "That also works! Monster is gender neutral, so if you just go with that when dealing with evil magic-users, you should be good."

"Guards! Guards! Help me!"

"Oi, monkey-man, the guards are here to _defend_ Arrendale. Seeing as you're the one who wants to spy on Arrendale, I don't think the guards will help you, will they?"

"I have no idea what you're talking about, you monster!"

"What do you mean, you were just trying to hire me to spy on the

Queen, weren't you?" Gray was starting to get annoyed. Freaking politicians. "Don't get mad just because you approached the wrong guy."

A grin took over the Duke's face. "But I'm not the one with a weapon at a formal dinner party, am I?"

Gray looked at the approaching guards, who were glaring at him. As they approached. They surrounded him and lowered their spears, forming a circle of sharp, pointy sticks all pointing at Gray, who immediately dispelled his spear, and put his hands in the air. "Oooh, good point. Heh, pointâ€|"

"THAT'S ENOUGH!"

Everyone present jumped and quickly turned to face one very angry monarch. The two guards escorting her were trying to talk her out of moving forward and convince her to go indoors, but she was having none of it. Finally, she shrugged their hands off her shoulders.

"You two make sure everyone stays away." The two guards looked at each other, considering disobeying. However, when they saw more soldiers coming, they nodded and ran off to keep the civilians back. Elsa turned her attention to the troublemakers. "Now, who would like to explain what just happened?"

Gray, abandoning all pretense of maturity, pointed at the Duke of Weaseltown and proclaimed, "He did it!"

Elsa resisted the urge to place her face in her hands and groan. She instead turned to the Duke. "Sir, would you care to elaborate on Mr. Marshall's statement?"

The Duke, clearly used to persuading people, began a tirade of complaints against Gray. "This, this, MONSTER, threatened myself and my men! I demand that something be done to protect my people! You've seen what he can do! It's only a matter of time before he murders us all in our sleep! I demand that he be removed from the grounds! I-"

Elsa cut him off. "You will demand nothing, sir Duke. As a guest, I must ask that you respect all other guests here, however strange-" She shot a glare at Gray, who shrugged with a grin, "they may be. I also cannot help but notice that you evaded my question. Would you please elaborate on Mr. Marshall's statement?"

The Duke looked angry, but quickly composed himself. "I was merely talking with this mercenary about his line of work. I can only hope that you could explain why a mercenary of all people was invited to your coronation ceremony. This wouldn't have anything to do with why your gates are closed, would it? Please, Queen Elsa, please do tell why the gates have been closed for so long."

Gray glanced down at Elsa's hand where her magic was beginning to form through the frost-glove. Immediately he tried to distract her. "Well, I think that this was a lovely chat, but perhaps Her Majesty should attend to the other gue-"

"Sir Duke, the gates' closing has absolutely nothing to do with what

we are talking about here. I shall ask again, please explain the situation." Elsa growled, the glove Gray had given her was beginning to grow spikes on the knuckles and back.

"Err, Your Majesty, I believe you should probably mind the glove-"

The Duke glared at Elsa. "And I suppose that your father had nothing to hide? I'm willing to bet that your father hid all his dirty little secrets behind those gates. Could it be that your father had something to be ashamed about? I wouldn't doubt-"

"Don't you dare insult my FATHER!" Elsa shouted. The magic exploded from Elsa's hand, freezing the ground immediately below it as icicles exploded outwards in every direction.

The guards shifted uneasily, unwilling to point their weapons at their Queen, but also slightly afraid of her anger. The Duke was not helping matters.

"Witch!" He screamed, scrambling backwards and falling into the fountain again.

"See?" Gray said, completely unfazed by the situation. "Now that word is acceptable because she's female. Monster also works, though, so I'd just recommend sticking to that from an insulting viewpoint."

Elsa, with her hand now clasped tightly to her chest, looked at Gray, clearly scared. "I-I-I-â€¦ I didn't mean to."

"Of course not, but magic feeds off of emotion. So, when stressed, it's best to let out your emotions a little at a time, rather than all at once."

Elsa, however, wasn't listening. "I-I'm so sorry." She said, turning to her guards who took a step back at her approach, but otherwise held their ground. Unfortunately, Elsa only saw them as afraid. "I-I'm sorry."

She turned and ran off, away from everybody and towards the fjord. Gray looked towards her retreating back and groaned.

"Oh, Elsa, no, what are you doing? That's really not helping!" He called after her retreating back. "I'll go after her." He said to the guards, who looked lost. He jerked his thumb over his shoulder. "Keep an eye on the monkey over there. He's a spy." Dodging around the ice Elsa had left behind, Gray began sprinting after the runaway Queen.

LINEBREAK

When he reached the fjord, he took a moment to take in the scene. Elsa's retreating figure was just reaching the far bank, while Anna and Hans held each other, obviously worried.

"Excuse me." Gray said, sliding around the couple before jumping onto the ice. As soon as his feet hit the ice, so did the rest of his body. "Owâ€¦" Quickly, he jumped back up, forming ice under his feet to make literal ice skates, and continued after Elsa.

"Hey!"

He whipped around, throwing ice shards into the air from his sudden stop. Anna was almost on the ice, the only reason she wasn't on the ice was because of Hans' arms around her torso. "Just where do you think you're going!?"

Gray glanced behind himself, then turned back. "Isn't it obvious? I'm going after the Queen."

Anna looked about ready to attack him. "No it's not! What does Elsa want to do with you!? This is all your fault!"

Gray rolled his eyes. "Look, Your Majesty, we can either stand here arguing, or I can go after your sister and get her to stop releasing her power. At the rate it's going, it's going to set off another ice age." He pointed with his thumb towards the fjord entrance. "She's already started with Arendelle. If she doesn't stop soon, I'll give it about a week before things start to go really bad."

Anna looked where he was pointing, where entire ships were being frozen solid, some dragged under while others were turned on their sides. She turned back to yell at him, but he was already gone, leaving nothing but two pairs of tracks disappearing into the woods.

"Come one, Anna. Let's get back. Your people need you." Hans said, pulling her closer to himself. Unfortunately for Anna, she failed to see the grin that spread over his face.

What an interesting turn of events.

LINEBREAK

Gray managed to catch up to Elsa quickly, only a few minutes later, probably because she was still wearing her heels from the party.

"Queen Elsa!" He called. She whipped around, clearly frightened. "How're you doing? Good? That's nice. Hey, listen, could you do us all a _huge_ favor and stop with the whole turn-summer-into-winter thing? That would be nice, thanks."

Elsa looked at him like he was insane, which was definitely a probability. "I-I-I don't know what you mean."

Gray grinned at her. "I know. Hey, look, so right now you've just frozen over most of the fjord." Elsa gasped, her hand flying up to cover her mouth. "So, if you'd be so kind, could you- Oh, right, I forgot. No controlâ€¦ Now how should we do thisâ€¦" He began muttering to himself, completely ignoring Elsa dropping to her knees. Today was just not her day.

"The-the whole fjord?" She finally managed, terrified.

"Hm? Oh, yeah, the whole thing. Last I saw, you got several ships completely encased. Not too shabby." He looked like he was going to continue praising her, but saw her face and her position on the ground. "But you don't want that, huh? Alright, come on." He walked

over to her and offered her his hands. "Time to get a move on if we want to go calm the people, right? I'm sure they're all very-"

"No."

Gray was surprised. "No? Why on Earth would you say that? You're their Queen, and right now your people need to know everything is going to be okay. Now come on, we're going to stand up, dust ourselves off, and get right on back to-"

"I'm not going back." Elsa stated, making no move to grab his outstretched hands. "I just need to go away. Far, far away, where I can't hurt anyone."

Gray looked at her. "Well that's not going to help."

Elsa looked up at him in shock. "What? What do you mean it won't do any good? If I leave, then everything will go back to normal. Anna will take over when she's old enough, and-"

"No. It won't." Gray interrupted. "Your magic is just going to keep growing and growing until either you give out, you stop it, or it covers the Earth with snow. Now, seeing as you don't want to go back, and you can't run away, how about we find somewhere nice, set up camp, and work on sorting all this out, alright?"

Elsa sniffed, blinking back tears that threatened to break out. "Alright." She grasped his hands and pulled herself to her feet.

"Excellent. Now, about that crazy blizzard. Elsa, where do you usually feel something when you use your powers?"

"I-I don't understand."

"Oh, how should I explain this? Oh, I know. When you use your powers, do you feel a kind of tug in your gut? Or maybe part of your brain itches?"

"What?"

"Where does your power come from?"

"Oh. Oh!" Understanding dawned on Elsa. "Well, when Anna and I played together, I'd usually feel a sort of warm feeling in my chest, but I always thought that that was happiness."

"No, it isâ€¦ What about more recently? Has anything been bothering you since you left?"

"My chest has been feeling kind of tight, but I thought that I was out of breath, or that I was sad."

"Well, I have two possible explanations. I'm guessing that your power comes from your emotions, which are centered in your heart. So in order to control itâ€¦" He started muttering again.

"In order to control itâ€¦" She urged him to continue.

"Oh!" He slammed his fist into the palm of his hand. "I know! Elsa, close your eyes."

"What? What good will that do?"

"Just do it."

"Oh, alright." Elsa closed her eyes and automatically took a deep breath.

"Now, Elsa, imagine that you're standing in a field. And in that field is a house, shaped like a heart."

Slowly, a field came into focus around Elsa. A house sprang up, its front door shaped like a heart. On the sides of the heart were dark shadows that made Elsa more nervous the longer she looked at them. Coming up from the shadows were tendrils of frost, which were ever so slowly creeping up the walls of the house and covering the windows.

"Yes."

Gray's voice resounded around here, appearing to come from everywhere all at once. "Alright, this field is your mind's eye. If I ever tell you to look with your mind's eye, recreate what you're looking at here. It helps with concentration for beginners. That house is your heart, if you ever feel off with your emotions, this will reflect the state of your heart."

"Alright."

"Now, go inside."

Elsa walked forward, tentatively reaching out to grasp the door handle, but nearly jumped back in shock when it felt ice-cold, completely contradictory to the warm, sunny field. But she steeled herself, and turned the knob.

Click.

Or at least, she tried to.

"Gray? The door won't open."

Silence.

"Gray?"

â€|

"Gray!"

"Yeah, yeah, I'm here. Um, how long has it been since you've ever opened up your heart to someone?"

"Umâ€|"

"Yeah, that's what I thought." He sighed. "Alright, give me a sec here."

Elsa waited, feeling a mixture of sadness and fear. What if she couldn't get into her heart? What if she had sealed her heart away even from herself? What if she couldn't stop her magic? What if-

"Hey! Elsa! Whatever you're doing, stop it! You're making it worse out here!"

Elsa's eyes flew to the house, where the frost was beginning to speed up, covering more of the house, stretching towards a heart-shaped weathervane at the top. Suddenly, the field and house fell away, and Elsa opened her eyes, back in the forest. She looked around for Gray, but couldn't find him. Had he left her alone?

"Hey, Elsa, why'd you come back? Oh, never mind, could you help me out here?"

Elsa whipped her head around, but found nothing but snowdrifts and trees. Then, one of the snowdrifts started to move.

"Over here!" The mound of snow called.

Elsa approached, and what she saw brought a smile to her lips, and she couldn't keep from letting out a small giggle.

Buried under the snow, his face planted in the ground like some crazy gopher, was Gray. He arched his neck, trying to get a look at her, but couldn't get higher than a few inches off the ground.

"Yeah, yeah, laugh all you want. But do you think you could help? I'm afraid my magic isn't working. Freaking magical snow, it never follows the same set of rules. One minute you can move it without lifting a finger, and the next it refuses to listen to your orders because it was made by someone else. Ridiculous."

Elsa started to shovel snow off of him, but he stopped her.

"No, stop. We'll use this time to practice. Tell the snow to go away."

Elsa wasn't convinced. "But aren't you cold?"

"Of course I'm cold! But I can't warm myself up without melting the snow now, can I? So hurry up and dig me out, I'm freezing!"

"All right, all right, calm down." Elsa said, starting to get annoyed. "What do I do?"

"Just make the snow go away."

Elsa was most definitely annoyed. "Yes, but _what do I do_?"

Gray looked up at her, or at least he tried to. "How should I know? It's your snow, you deal with it."

Had Elsa not had the innumerable classes of proper manners, she probably would have kicked Gray's head and driven it further into the ground. As it was, she went for the slightly redundant tactic of dumping more snow on his head.

"â€| "

Elsa leaned down and uncovered his head. "What was that?"

Gray couldn't completely face her, but from what she saw, he was almost laughing. "Well, at least you've got making the snow down." He blew some snow from his lips, then shook his head. "Well don't just stand there! Un-do the snow!"

Elsa glared down at him. "I told you already, I don't know what to do!" She shouted. Then she added in a whisper. "I don't know what to do."

"Well I should hope you don't know what to do! If you did, I hopefully wouldn't be in this mess now, would I?" Gray sighed. "Fine, we'll work on this later. For now, let's set up camp before it gets any darker."

Elsa nodded, and watched intently. Gray looked up at her.

"You know, you might want to move back a bit. Don't want to burn the Queen her first day on the job."

Elsa took a step back, confused. "Burn me? How could you burn me from undernea-"

The entire snow pile began glowing red, and Gray sighed in happiness. "Aaah, that's better. I've always hated the cold, you know? Figures I'd get sent a few degrees south of freezing-to-death."

Elsa was stupefied. "How-how are you doing that?"

Gray, managing to lift his head a bit higher, gave her a confused look. "I don't understand the question."

Elsa gestured at the swiftly-dwindling snow pile. "Melting the snow! I thought you said you couldn't affect my snow with your magic!"

Gray nodded, pulling himself into an up-right position and crossing his legs. "Oh, that feels nice. Of course I can't affect your snow, it doesn't listen to me."

Elsa stood, mouth agape at Gray. She pointed a finger at him. "You're-y-y-y-you'reâ€| "

Gray looked at her, now very confused. "Yes?" He asked, waving for her to continue.

"You're on FIRE!"

It was true. The entirety of Gray's back was covered with dark red flames that were licking at his hair. Gray just nodded as though it were the most natural thing in the world. "Of course! I can't melt snow without heat now, can I?"

Elsa just nodded, not sure of what else to do. Gray made an 'oh' with his mouth, then slapped himself on the forehead. "Of course! I never explained this, did I? Oh, geezâ€| Alright, I'll give you the run-down when we set up camp." He leapt to his feet, and the flames

on his back dissipated, leaving him completely untouched. He held out his hand, indicating the mountain-top just half a mile ahead. "Now, shall we continue?"

LINEBREAK

Going up the mountain was fairly easy, but before they could get to the summit, they were stopped by a very deep, very wide ravine. Gray let out a low whistle.

"Well, that's certainly a long way down. Too bad, and we were so close to such a nice view, too." He turned around, and brought his hand up to his forehead. "Well, there's got to be some kind of shelter around here. A cave, maybe?"

Elsa gave him a skeptical look. "Well, can't you just make us a shelter? You can control ice, can't you?"

"So can you." Gray shot back, looking annoyed. "Besides, your ice magic is freaking everywhere. I can't do anything with ice right now. I try-" He held out his hand, where a single snowflake formed before being whisked away by the wind. "And your magic shuts me down."

Elsa was taken aback. She had thought that Gray, who had obviously trained for much longer than she, would be more powerful. She shared her thoughts with him.

"Well, yes, if we both started out with the same amount of magical power the better trained of us would win. However, in terms of sheer power, you've got me beat by a long shot."

"But you could melt my snow just fine."

"Well, yeah, of course. Fire and snow don't have any influence over each other, magically. But even so, if your power was actively trying to suppress mine, or resisting melting, I would have been stuck under there until you dug me out."

Elsa nodded, frightened at the prospect.

"But thankfully, your magic is only summoning snow, not enhancing it. So we should be good in terms of snow removal."

Again, Elsa nodded, the exhaustion from the day's events finally catching up with her. Gray took note of her drooping eyelids and let out a small grin.

"Ah, well, no matter. The point is, we've got to help you with your control. We can start in the morning. I'll take watch."

Elsa just nodded, already half-asleep. She wrapped herself in her cloak and tried to get comfortable on the surprisingly soft ground. As she drifted off she heard Gray's faint voice.

"About time you got here, I was starting to think you managed to get lost. Oh, and you even brought the trunk. Excellent."

End

file.